

JOAQUIN MILLER TELLS THE LATEST NEWS FROM THE KLONDYKE TRAIL

Laughing at the Jam of Disgusted Miners, the Prospectors Turning Back and the Tales of Terror from the Trail, the Journal's Poet Correspondent Shouldered His Pack and Started with the Long White Procession Over the Pass.



Women Gold Seekers Bound for the Klondyke.

Drawn from a photograph taken on the steamer Mexico on the trip northward from Seattle. On the return trip the steamer was wrecked.

By Joaquin Miller.

Dyea, Alaska, July 31, via San Francisco, Aug.

13.—Here we are at last; the only navigation beyond this is a few miles canoeing, and no canoe at this time, or Indians to paddle them. But let us look back at last landing, Skaguay, five miles back, as the crow flies. There is a congestion there, a case of aggregate pneumonia, so to speak, for the new pass is no pass at all, or at least is not open at the other end.

A big steamer made the first landing there a few days before us, and left about 200 miners, along with almost as many tons of freight; also some horses. It now turns out that the trail is not open. All sorts of stories are afloat. We had on our steamer much freight and many miners, as well as horses and dogs. It would seem that the new trail was advertised as open by its proprietors some weeks ago. It now appears that the surveyors of the trail only landed here last week.

Of course, all this is confusing and costly to miners, as they cannot get from Skaguay to Dyea because of the rocky walls that reach down from the clouds and snow to the water's edge. Just now a stolid old German came up and said dolefully, "Dis is von tam rocky country."

As we have been toiling and striving for nearly five days between walls of inaccessible rock, I shall, I think, agree with him that it is.

Set to Work on the Trail.

To return to the congestion of Skaguay. Our captain had no option but to land goods as they had been billed, for he kindly offered to bring all who wished to come on here to Dyea, so that they might take the old road. He landed almost half our miners and their effects. They will go into camp there and set to work helping to push the trail through, as about fifty are doing already. There are about seventy-five men and a few women in camp at Skaguay. Much indignation is felt and openly expressed against the proprietors of the trail. They have a store, with all sorts of things to sell, including town lots and whiskey.

Almost thirty miners have turned back to the scenes of their childhood, or at least to their homes, wherever they may be. You will hear from them, of course. This always happens. It came to pass in '49. I have seen men turning back and making things blue with curses in Idaho and Montana when within a few miles of the mines. I think you will find men turning faint of heart as far back as Moses.

This turning back signifies nothing. Those men who have turned back at the base of a long, decadent mountain have heard nothing and seen nothing at all of mines ahead. They have not even wet their feet in the snow. It is a jest for them, and for all that they have stepped out and given place to brave men. This is to be a case of the "survival of the fittest."

A strong company of Montana and British-American miners, with such men as the Bond brothers, Pierce and Marshall, are landed and stranded at Skaguay. Of course, they have plenty of money, horses, dogs and tons of supplies; they are cool and resolute men, and I think will get through in time. A part of their outfit came up with us. They are only an example of those tied up at Skaguay. They have no way of coming here, and are not the sort of men to turn back. Pierce told me of a man who had sold his outfit to a lone woman, a cook, at Seattle prices, boats and all.

A man from San Francisco offered me his \$200 outfit for \$30, the price of a steerage return.

Now, mark you, this discouraged man has not heard one word from the mines behind the mountains, good or bad, since the first rich reports, which came before we all set out.

Of course, I did not want his blood on my hands and would not buy. He found a buyer, however, in the man in charge of the store, who sells town lots and whiskey. The man paid \$30 for his outfit and a week's work on the trail.

Man Who Lied About the Trail Safe.

I have heard it said that as the man who has been getting miners into such trouble by his stories about a new road was at the other side of the mountain, which is in Canada, he was not in particular danger of being hanged.

However, the American boys at Skaguay are all mightily good natured, better natured or more serenely jolly men I have never known, and if they do hang the man with a new trail and town lots and whiskey, they will be good natured about it and hand him as pleasantly as they can.

The situation along here is dramatic—comedy is here to-day, plenty of it. There possibly may be tragedy, but I think nothing of the sort will happen. The men of Skaguay must get through, and they are of the sort that will if they must.

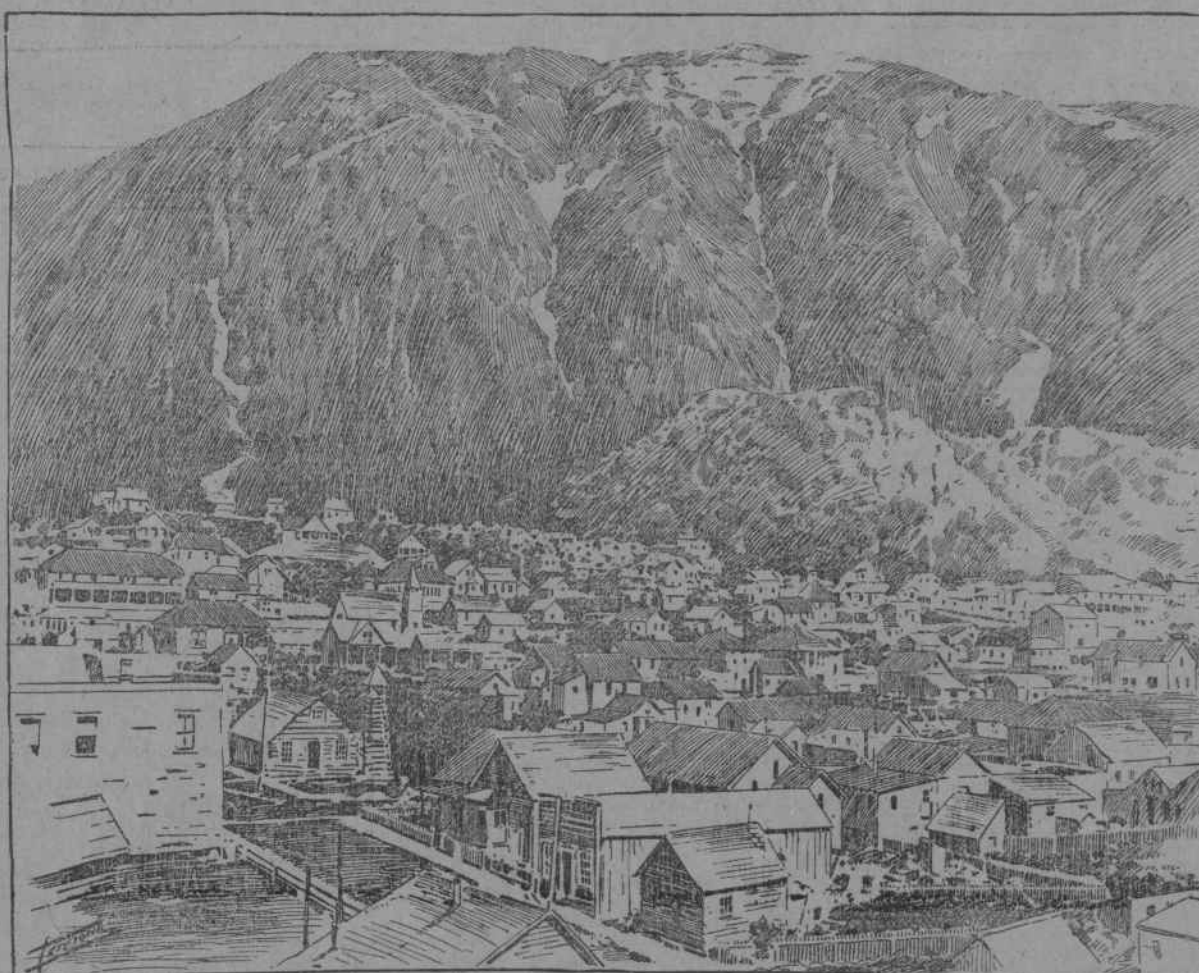
Fortunately we have the finest weather in the world. But this is not California climate. We may have rain and rain and rain almost any day. And I hear that the trail—the one and only open trail—is muddy to the knees. However, you can hear almost anything. The only way is to pick up your pack and go ahead, and then you will really and truly know,

and then only.

We were a long time landing, away out in the water, for there is no wharf at Skaguay. We had to boat off all the stuff and let the horses down on a raft in boxes with a block and tackle. Strange to say, we have landed both here and at Dyea hundreds of little sheet iron stoves, and we landed rubber goods by tons and tons.

Dyea's Sublimely Grand Scenery.

Dyea is a long, low marsh, lying between the snow-covered walls of granite. The marsh is almost half a mile wide; trees of a good size fill the gorge a little further up and away from the bay and marsh, but the trees all along here, as a rule, are small, no larger than a leg or arm, and almost half



Juneau, the Outpost of Civilization, Described by Joaquin Miller.

The last town of importance on the route to Klondyke. Juneau, is built on the slope between an abrupt mountain range and the sea. Opposite lies Douglas Island, on which is the famed Treadwell mine. The drawing is from a photograph taken from the Court House.

CURRENT OPINION ON THE JOURNAL CORRESPONDENT.

[From the New York World.]

Joaquin Miller is a mountaineer, accustomed to wrestle with savage nature. He is a miner, familiar with the manners and customs of mining camps. He is a lifelong seeker of adventure. And finally he knows how to tell about what he sees in English which has been long admired for its simple and faithful yet poetic picturing of life.

[From the New York World.]

To the Editor of the World:
* * * As a special correspondent the old "Poet of the Sierras" is a decided success. Give us all you can of him. READER.
New York, July 28.

[From the New York Herald.]

The Herald takes pleasure in acknowledging the enterprise displayed by the Journal in promptly moving to get the fullest and most accurate news from the Alaskan gold fields.

As will be seen by the announcement we reprint on this page from its issue of yesterday, our wideawake contemporary has sent a large and able corps of special correspondents to the Klondyke region and arranged for the quick transmission of their dispatches by special couriers.



The Journal Correspondent Among the Natives at Metlakantla.

Joaquin Miller, the poet of the Sierras, among "Father" Duncan's wards on the island given over by the United States Government to their occupation. Drawn from a photograph taken by the photographer of the Journal expedition.

of them are dead or dying. If one cared to look on the gray side of the situation he might easily write of the location and all the land about "the abomination of desolation." But, on the contrary, the scene is grand, grand, sublimely grand, and the air is sweet, healthful and invigorating as wine. The heaven's breath smells wooingly here.

You never saw snow so white anywhere as here. "White as snow, whiter than any fuller can whiten." This is because this is a land of granite; no dust in the air as in California or Colorado, no tall trees to scatter bits of bark and leaves and litter through the air and over the snow. One constantly thinks of the transfiguration all along this land of whiteness and blue; white clouds, white snow, blue seas and blue skies. Heavens, had I but years to live here and lay my hand upon this color, this fearful and wonderful garment of the most high God!

Packs Coming Up in Boats.

Hello, there comes the porter in a big boat with a lot of packs, mine among them; a big, long white chest bag, just like the 49ers had of old, only theirs did not look so white. We are sitting on a rim of rocks that hang under the great fall of granite on the edge of the water, waiting for our stuff. The boats dot the bay. They have been busy all night, all day and all yesterday. The "town," a store and post office, lies half a mile away from the landing.

I thank you, jolly porter. Here's a piece of white money in exchange for yonder pretty white bag. Lord, but won't I sit down on this long, white bag of blankets, bacon, sea biscuit, boots, comb, tooth brushes manuscript and poems in their infancy. Before I get through yonder hall of clouds, won't I wish, my big fat bag, that you were not quite so lanky to look upon. Ah, no, I am not afraid. My heart is full and glad of this scene, this chance to be with the strong, young fellows, this new generation, for all my old friends of the old California, Idaho and Montana days are dead or laid up for repairs, and I'm the oldest, in experience, at least, if not in years, of all the bold fellows about me along here.

Off on the Long, Hard Tramp.

I take up my pack—more details of it and contents anon—and we trudge away, a long white line, looking no larger than mice at the further end, for my pack is among the last.

Good-by, Captain Thomas, and good-by to your fine officers and crew. Better or kinder men I never knew. Such careful men, too. I cabined with the pilots, but when they or Captain Thomas or the purser ever slept I never knew. But I learned from the care and constant caution of the pilots that it is no picnic to drive a big ship between these walls of granite and snow. The soundings are not complete and buoys are needed. And even if all was done there would still be dense white clouds to push through at times.

Good-by, my pretty ship, City of Mexico. I shall n